

Nipissing University

Accessible Customer Service Policy

1. Our Mission

Nipissing University is a learning community that:

- commits itself to the highest standards in teaching, research and scholarly activities
- encourages students, faculty and staff to realize their full intellectual and personal potential
- prepares students to make positive contributions as citizens and leaders
- is committed to serving the needs of its regional, provincial and global communities
- commits itself to increasing accessibility to under-represented groups

To achieve this mission, Nipissing University emphasizes excellence in teaching enriched by scholarship and research. It encourages meaningful interaction between students and faculty and participation in extra-curricular activities.

2. Our Commitment to Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

In fulfilling our mission, Nipissing University strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as all members of our teaching and learning environment.

3. Application of this Policy

This policy applies to all members of Nipissing University, including faculty, staff, and volunteers, students on placement or independent contractors who interact with persons with disabilities who access our services or use our facilities. All members of Nipissing are responsible for complying with and demonstrating behaviours that are consistent with this policy. Administrative and Department heads are additionally responsible for providing support, guidance and education while ensuring compliance with this policy.

Nipissing University will maintain an Accessibility Planning Committee as required by *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (2005). The University will also designate a Certifier and an optional Administrator for the purpose of filing Accessibility Reports as set out by the Act.

4. Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Nipissing University is committed to excellence in serving all customers including persons with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

4.1 Communication

Nipissing University communicates with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the specific needs of the disability. Relay telephone, e-mail, TTY, or another communication medium will be used if telephone communication is not suitable, or is not available. Any requested documents, as agreed upon by the University and the person with the disability, will be made available in an alternate format that takes into account the person's disability. All employees shall be trained on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

4.2 Assistive Devices

Nipissing University is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons using our goods or accessing our services

We will also ensure that designated staff are familiar with the following assistive devices/services available on our premises for persons with disabilities:

- TTY
- Telephone relay services
- FM systems
- CCTV
- Digital recorders
- Scanners
- Assistive technology and software
- Alternate format production
- Academic accommodations for persons with disabilities
- Accessible pedestrian routes inside and outside buildings

4.3 Administrative and Financial Transactions

Nipissing University is committed to providing accessible administrative and financial documents relating to its operations and accounts. Financial records are produced electronically and are therefore accessible in various formats. Designated staff are available to answer questions regarding all administrative and financial documents in person, by telephone or email.

Nipissing University's Request for Proposal (RFP) template outlines the contractor/agent's requirement to ensure that all contractor/agents have participated in accessible customer service training.

5. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

Nipissing University is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. If the animal is excluded by law, Nipissing University will ensure that other measures are made available to enable persons with disabilities the same opportunities. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, confirmation may be requested.

Nipissing University is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Support persons are not required to pay tuition or incidental fees for courses, unless the support person is also taking the course for credit. If an amount is payable by a support person for admission to any event on campus, Nipissing University will ensure that notice is provided in advance regarding the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person. Such notice, if any, shall be included with registration information when applicable.

Nipissing University may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if accompaniment by a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

6. Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption

Nipissing University provides notice of planned or unplanned disruption of services to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. In the case of an unexpected temporary disruption, where advanced notice is not possible, notice will be provided as soon as reasonably possible. This will be done by posting notice(s) in conspicuous place(s) on the premises of Nipissing University and/or on Nipissing University's website or by other reasonable methods in the circumstances. This notice will include the reason for and information about the disruption, anticipated duration, description of alternate facilities or services, if available; and contact information. (See **Appendix A – Notice of Service Disruption Form**)

7. Training

Accessibility awareness training shall be provided to employees and volunteers as soon as practical following commencement of their duties. Training will also be provided on an on-going basis, in connection with any changes to the policy and in support of procedures and practices that govern the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities. Accessibility awareness training includes:

- The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence;
- How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- Notice of disruptions in service;
- How to use equipment or devices that are on Nipissing University's premises or are provided by Nipissing University that may assist with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing any goods and services;
- Nipissing University's policies, practices and procedures relating to the Accessible Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Training records shall be maintained in the Human Resources department. Any department that utilizes the services of volunteers or any other third parties are responsible for ensuring that they have received training and are responsible for forwarding these records to the Human Resources department for reporting purposes

8. Feedback process

Feedback is welcomed and appreciated as it may identify areas that require change and it encourages continuous service improvements. Feedback can be provided to any member of the Nipissing University Accessibility Planning Committee or by using the Accessibility Feedback Form (See **Appendix B**) which is available electronically or in an alternate format, if requested. Names and contact information of members of the Accessibility Planning Committee are listed at the Accessibility Planning section of the Nipissing University website. Feedback can be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or any other method of communication that is accessible to the person(s). Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. Some complaints, suggestions or recommendations may, however, require more effort to address and must be reviewed for action. Feedback will be reviewed and responded to within 14 days or as soon as reasonably possible.

9. Modifications to this or other University Policies

Nipissing University is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering how such changes may impact persons with disabilities. Any University policy that does not respect or promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be reviewed and modified or removed.

10. Questions about this Policy

Questions, clarification, or recommendations for changes to this policy shall be directed to the Nipissing University Accessibility Planning Committee for review and consideration. Any member of the Committee may bring questions or recommendations forward. Decisions of the Committee on any matter being considered will be recorded in the minutes of the Committee.

Definitions

Service Animal is any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability in the following circumstances:

- (a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; and/or
- (b) If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person is any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Assistive Device is an auxiliary aid such as communication aid, cognition aid, personal mobility or medical aid (e.g. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc).

Disability is defined as:

- a. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal (service animal) or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a development disability;
- c. A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d. A mental disorder; or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

Appendix A

NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

DURATION OF DISRUPTION:

COMMENCING: _____

ENDING: _____

NATURE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION:

ALTERNATIVE SERVICES:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE:

CONTACT PERSON: _____

LOCATION: _____

EMAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

TTY: _____

This notice is posted in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* Ontario Regulation 429/07

Date Posted: _____

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this disruption.



Appendix B

Accessibility Feedback Form

- 1. Describe any accessibility barriers or obstacles at the University that you have observed or experienced.**

- 2. Describe any disability-related services or accommodations that you required but were not available through the appropriate department of the University (e.g. Student Development & Services, Human Resources, Physical Plant, etc.).**

- 3. Please provide suggestions for change involving the instructional/learning or work environment at Nipissing University that would improve access or remove barriers for persons with disabilities.**

4. Please identify any policies, practices, programs or services that you are aware of that create barriers for persons with disabilities.

Optional (but required if you request us to contact you):

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone : _____

Email: _____

Please use the last page of this questionnaire for additional comments and suggestions

Please deliver your comments or completed questionnaire:

In person:

Print and deliver a copy of this completed questionnaire to Dan Pletzer, Nipissing University Student Development & Services (Room A201)

By telephone:

Referring to the questionnaire, you may arrange to provide your comments by calling 705-474-3450 ext. 4493

By email:

Attach a completed electronic copy of this questionnaire to an email message to damp@nipissingu.ca

By mail:

Send your completed questionnaire to:

Dan Pletzer
Manager Counselling and Disability Services
Nipissing University
100 College Drive
North Bay, ON P1B 8L7

